12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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customers of the patron remain in their isolated dwellings the year round.

Every rubber collector deals steadily with the same patron, because the latter controls the section of forest land in which his clients work. The trader usually has no legal title, but receives rights of exploitation by paying the state tax on the gross cash return from the land. The right of exploitation, perpetuated by the state tax, usually rests on a nebulous title, and, according to Wagley, it is "control over the land, and not legal documents" which establishes ownership in the Amazon.[5] The patron grants permission to the rubber tapper to extract rubber from his lands and, in return, exerts a trade monopoly in which his client sells rubber to him and buys goods from him. The patron profits from both sale and purchase and, since he passes the state tax on to the rubber collector, the latter receives but small return in terms of the prices prevailing in the urban markets. The client has freedom of movement only when he is not in debt to the patron, which rarely happens. If he owes money, he can transfer to another patron only if the new one settles the debt and transfers it to his own books. The rubber collector sometimes deals with the *regatões*, or itinerant merchants who ply the rivers, but these transactions are infrequent and in small amounts because the patron does not tolerate a substantial loss of commerce. The rubber collector who deals too often with the *regatão* might be denied credit by his regular patron or, less frequently, evicted from his avenue.

The economic power of the trader is especially strong on the upper Tapajós River because of a combination of geographic and economic factors. The lower Tapajós, from its mouth at Santarém to the first rapids 150 miles upstream, is economically diversified, and its rubber pro-

[5] Wagley, 1953, p. 92.